

STORIES of New Jersey

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THE MINK FARM

The growing popularity of fur coats for women has stimulated an interest in the raising of furred animals. Furriers prefer skins from animals in their natural state in the colder countries. A few enterprising people, however, have accepted the challenge of adapting thick furred animals to an unnatural environment and have started farms within easy distance of large markets. The industry is still in its pioneer stage and involves considerable risk and expense.

There is a fox farm near Phillipsburg and others have been tried elsewhere in the State, but not many individuals have attempted to supply the market for mink, a particularly luxurious fur. The finest minks come from Labrador, Russia, Alaska and other parts of Canada, extending as far south as Quebec and even into Maine.

On Berdan Avenue in Fairlawn, New Jersey, there is a large mink farm that is well worth a visit. William Pfeiffer, the owner, who started his business only recently is constantly seeking ways to develop in his minks the same thick, dark supple fur borne by the animals that roam the northern woods. So far the experts feel that the natural wild life and colder climate are important factors in producing rich fur and strong pelts.

As the animals move farther south, the fur becomes lighter in color, coarser in texture, and the pelt thinner. The most desirable minks are those with silky dark brown fur with an undertone of bluish black.

Related to the weasel and the true polecat (not the skunk), the mink is about 18 or 20 inches long, of very slender build and with short legs. The feet are partially webbed, since in its natural habitat the mink is a semi-aquatic animal, feeding largely on fish. There is a rather bushy tail and the fur under the chin is marked with a few white spots.

At the Pfeiffer minkery there are now about 110 animals, and the owner expects to add another hundred. He can get \$24 to \$30 in the New York market for a perfect pelt. It takes from 30 to 60 minks to make one coat, depending on the size of the minks and the size of the lady, so, at best, not more than four potential mink coats are now running around the farm.